



# News

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## BLM Issues a Recordable Disclaimer of Interest For Chilkoot River & Chilkoot Lake

Anchorage – Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alaska State Director Henri Bisson signed a disclaimer of interest today, February 1, 2006, stating the federal government has no valid interest to the lands underlying the lower Chilkoot River, Chilkoot Lake, and ten (10) miles of the upper Chilkoot River.

The BLM analyzed evidence submitted by the State and prepared a summary report for public review. The final report accepted previous BLM navigability determinations, and acknowledged that the federal government does not hold an interest in those lands due to navigability or because the uplands have been conveyed away.

At the time of statehood, title to unreserved lands underlying navigable waters vested with the State of Alaska under the Equal Footing Doctrine and the Submerged Lands Act of 1953. Navigable waters are inland waters used, or were susceptible for use, at the time of statehood for travel, trade, and commerce. The Submerged Lands Act of 1988 made the BLM's previous navigability determinations final for the Department of the Interior. The 1988 Act also confirmed ownership of the submerged lands of non-navigable waters to the State of Alaska, Native Corporations, or Native Allottees.

In 1976, Congress gave the Interior Department discretionary authority under Section 315 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to issue recordable disclaimers of interest. Disclaimers of interest may be used to remove a cloud, or a perceived cloud, on a title when a determination has been made that such lands are not lands of the United States and the United States does not hold a valid interest in those lands. A recordable disclaimer of interest is a document that affirms the United States does not claim an interest in specific lands – it is prepared in such a way that will meet local requirements so that it may be “recorded” – hence the “recordable disclaimer of interest”.

For more information, please contact Carolyn Spoon, Chief, Branch of Lands & Realty at (907) 271-4207.

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